DESIGN

A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers



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Toys from six countries

Design in British dress textiles

Crafts and industry in Scandinavia

Enlarging the market for good design

COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

Number 24: December 1950

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS



A small boy on a tricycle. Nothing special about that — unless he thinks he's a dirt-track rider, when you have to look out. But a couple of generations ago there was no T.I., and most small boys had nothing more exciting to ride than a tea-tray. No trikes, no children's bikes, no rocking boats, or chutes, or slides.

or climbing frames, or half the things clever people manufacture from (as it happens) T.I. materials. Nor much help from Mother, either, with no T.I. to help her run the house. Yet even today . . . funny thing . . . you hardly ever hear a child mention T.I.

The letters T.1. stand for Tube Investments Limited, of the Adelphi, London, W.C.2 (Trafalgar 5633). They also stand for the thirty producing companies of the co-ordinated T.1. group, makers of precision tubes, of bicycles and components, of wrought aluminium alloys, electrical appliances, pressure vessels, paints, road signs, metal furniture . . . and essential mechanical parts for a thousand and one things which everybody uses.



THE SURNAME OF A THOUSAND THINGS

DESIGN

A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers

ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND THE SCOTTISH COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL

NUMBER 24 : DECEMBER 1950

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EDITOR: Alec Davis EDITORIAL OFFICES: Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1 Whitehall 6322

DESIGN IS INDIVISIBLE

IT HAS BEEN suggested that the Council of Industrial Design should produce two magazines, one for the decorative industries and the other for the engineering industries. There have been comments from each side that DESIGN pays too much attention to the other, that in any given issue a manufacturer may find no reference to his own field of activity though plenty of reference to others in which he is not concerned.

There are attractive arguments in favour of specialisation. It would be fine to have enough support and paper to produce a separate DESIGN journal for each industry. The success of the trade press is based on such specialisation, on the finding of and sticking to homogeneous readerships united by common interests, and it would be hard to argue that a magazine devoted exclusively, say, to pottery design would not be more saleable to potters than one dealing with a dozen or more industries. But to accept such specialisation would be to deny one of the fundamental premises behind the work of the Council of Industrial Design, namely, that design, like peace, is indivisible, that cross-fertilisation of ideas from one industry to another is essential to a general raising of standards.

Exclusive *expertise* is one of the pitfalls of contemporary civilisation and designing falls into this trap more easily than most forms of human activity. Overconcentration on a narrow field is the line of least re-

sistance but also the shortest cut to sterility for any designer. The fact that there are two distinct aspects to industrial design—the engineering or functional and the decorative or aesthetic—is a problem to be faced, not an issue to be shirked. As has been well said elsewhere *: "Designers fall into two large fraternities: the education of one fraternity began with the steam valve, for the other fraternity it was the life class.... If both kinds of designers would realise that they practise in common the same creative act of design, the steam valve fraternity would no longer be ashamed of the artistic element in their work but would cultivate good taste and the life class fraternity would become more methodical in assembling their data and in checking their results."

Yet it is not just a question of function and taste. There are sound practical arguments in favour of general reading on design. A designer or manufacturer who keeps his nose glued to his own grindstone will have some difficulty in keeping his ear to the ground at the same time, but unless he does so he is likely to find himself out on a limb, cut off from trends and developments which, though they may seem to have little bearing on his immediate interests, will sooner or later radically affect his own markets.

^{* &}quot;Industrial Design and the Engineering Industries" by M. Hartland Thomas, Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, 28 January 1949.

continued

It was no accident that the vogue for flush doors coincided with the cleaning up of other domestic arrangements, with the shaving of the gas cooker, for instance, or the removal of wrinkles from the refrigerator. It was all part of the same functional trend which was reflected, too, in the craft-based industries.

It would be too easy if we could find some single bell-wether to point these trends; if we could, for instance, say "Keep your eye on the architect, for he is the leader." Unfortunately, it is not so simple. Design is a product of many influences and history has proved the interdependence of design from industry to industry. This magazine must continue to report as widely and fairly as possible developments in many industries.

P. R.

Applied art-and industrial design-in the new books

The Creative Craftsman by John Farleigh (Bell, 21s); Leather and Craftsmanship by John Waterer (Faber, 12s 6d); Product Development and Design by A. W. Willsmore (Pitman, 12s 6d); Productivity Report: Packaging (Anglo-American Council on Productivity, 2s 6d)

DESIGN IS UNUSUALLY well represented in recently published books—perhaps an indication of growing interest in this subject among the discriminating public, as well as those whose business is with design.

By the differences in their contents and in their authors' outlook, three new books emphasise the importance of design in the artist-craftsman's studio, the engineering works, and the broad mass of consumer-goods industries. John Farleigh's concern is with the artist-craftsman, and he devotes a chapter apiece to 14 living practitioners of as many crafts. The personal publicity which is unavoidable with this treatment is subordinated to the main purpose of showing how (and why) representative craftsmen follow their crafts in an age of increasing mechanisation.

Craftsmanship is prominent also in the theme of John Waterer's latest book. He proclaims his belief that "craftsmanship is not incompatible with factory production, or even with machine-production on a large scale"; and, moreover, that "we have allowed ... a haze of Morris-tinted romanticism to warp our conception of craftsmanship." These views are wholly compatible with admiration for the work of the artist-craftsman, but they come aptly from the pen of a manufacturer-designer in the leather industry, which produces objects of deliberate aesthetic appeal and others which are bought for their usefulness. To contrast handbags and jewel-cases on the one hand with saddles and suitcases and surveyors' tape-cases on the other is to realise the difference between applied art and industrial design. In the applied-art industries, the value of the product depends mainly on its appearance, and recognition of the importance of good appearance is fundamental (though opinion as to what is good may differ). In other industries, performance is the first essential, but appearance is

still important—more important than has been generally recognised in the recent past.

Books like A. W. Willsmore's can help to secure wider recognition of its importance. He sees design as an essential part—but a part only—of productive industry. His book touches on such diverse but important subjects as market research, technical research, and patent protection, as well as design; and it has a most valuable chapter on "Production Planning" which emphasises that any new design, whether the designer is primarily an artist or primarily an engineer, must be studied and may have to be modified in view of the men, machinery and materials available.

It is here, of course, that the artist-craftsmen have the advantage over the rest of us. Once a design has to be produced by a machine, or, for that matter, by any man other than the designer, there is a problem of "production design" to be solved; this is one of the most valid reasons for advocacy of teamwork, based on mutual understanding, in industrial design.

The importance of a satisfactory relationship between design and production is implicit also in the recently published Productivity Report on Packaging. The report makes many comments on package design—mentioning, incidentally, that in the studios of some American packaging firms there is a section concerned exclusively with "preparation for production"; but its emphasis is on the use of fast, versatile automatic packaging machines in American industry. It states: "There is a real need in many industries in Britain for machinery of this type...." Such mechanisation—provided the package is designed with the machine's potentialities in mind—can maintain a standard of quality and at the same time replace human labour in many monotonous repetitive tasks.

A. D.

AS AN INTRODUCTION to the feature on Design in British Dress Textiles which begins overleaf, we illustrate here reversible woollens and fine costume cloths woven in blended colouring. The heavy reversible coat cloths are by Shaw Bros; lightweight reversible Border tweed by Reid and Taylor Ltd; striped lightweight woollens by Gledhill Bros and Co Ltd. The Cooper thread-symbol technique, which discards point-paper and uses rectangular symbols, was used in evolving the Gledhill designs. The symbols are plugged into a perforated board to represent the interlacing of warp and weft threads; when the enlarged pattern which they form is seen through a reducing glass, it accurately represents the appearance of the fabric-while there is still time to make alterations if need be

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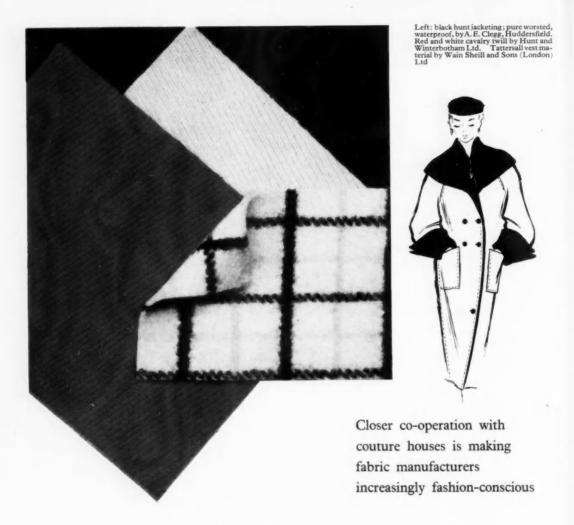
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Design in British dress textiles

IN THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES the teamwork of designers and technologists has done much to produce fine products. The requirements of the finished article are borne in mind throughout production; the product is truly functional, designed to meet specified requirements.

In fabric manufacturing, the process must be similar. The couturier, fabric manufacturer, designer and weaver should all work together to evolve materials which, while completely practical, answer the dictates of fashion and blend in a harmonious finished design. They should keep in mind, from the incep-

tion, the purpose and occasion for which the fabric is to be used.

The best British cloths are unmatched in quality. In woollens and worsteds we have long been acknowledged world leaders; and in novelty fabrics, where Italy and France gave the lead, we find British firms winning increased prestige abroad. Standards of weaving have always been high; now there is a new aliveness and colour blending and fashion consciousness.

The group of hunting cloths above illustrates fabrics which bring craftsmanship in weaving to its

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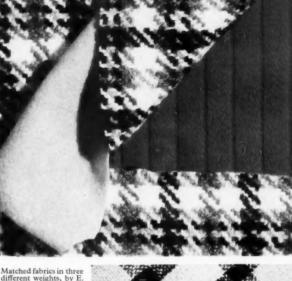
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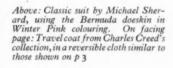
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Right: Bermuda doeskin by Hunt and Winterbotham, and flat cord rib by John Knox, Silsden; both shown in the Festival buses during their tour of Europe. Check coating by Dormeuil Freres, London, which was used by Lachasse



Matched fabrics in three different weights, by E. Gardiner and Sons Ltd, Selkirk; used by Peter Russell in his *Red Pewter* ensemble. The background is crepe tweed by the same firm



highest degree, preserving, as is necessary in such cloths, resistance to rain, elasticity for comfort and easy movement; and traditional colourings. These are *functional* cloths.

In the fashion field, matched ensemble fabrics in various weights have become particular favourites of couturiers, both in London and Paris. Crepe tweeds are used by Dior, Hardy Amies, Balmain and other couturiers; the extreme pliability of the fabric lends itself to detailed and skilful modelling. Because of their lightness in weight and resistance to creasing, these fabrics are good for travel and tropical wear.

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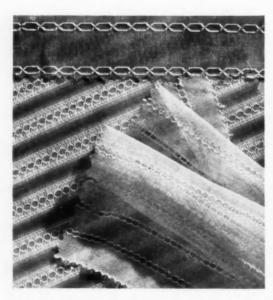
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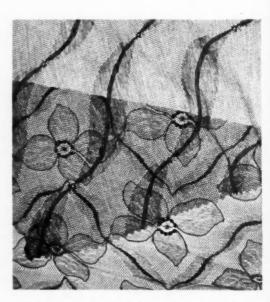
CLOQUES: Spider's-web pattern by Argand Ltd, Bradford; the others by Driver Bros, Silsden



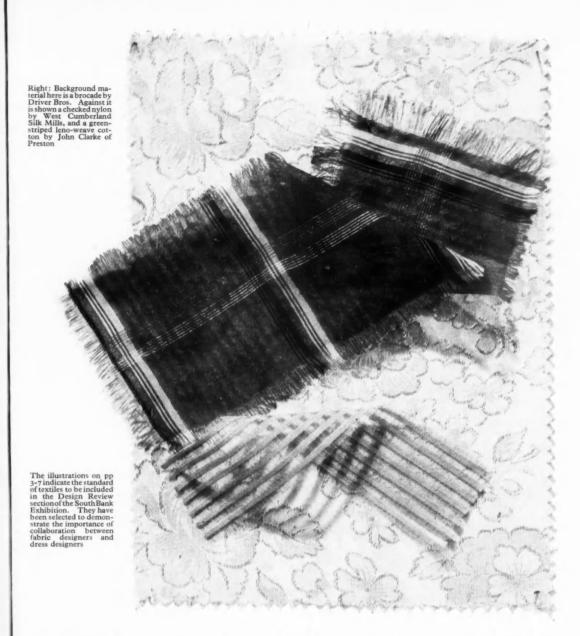
Shown here as background to the Jean Desses model for which it was used is a novelty fabric by West Cumberland Silk Mills: a pure silk chenille-threaded cloth giving a dappled effect, designed by Miki Sekkers. Extreme simplicity of design suits this type of fabric



VOILES: Common to these three designs by Tootal Broadhurst Lee is a drawn threadwork motif woven as an integral part of the design



LACE: Two examples of unorthodox design, from a selection made by the Lace Embroidery Employers' Association



In a different field are the cloqués, revived to meet the interest in surface texture. The examples illustrated opposite show the diversity of design obtainable; the two-tone and multi-tone effects are refreshing. Here the character of the fabric dictates the style, which, in order to exploit its beauty, should be uncomplicated in cutting and trimming.

In voile, an intricate weaving technique has been exploited to meet a demand for sheer materials.

The laces break away from the orthodox patterns which are perennial favourites; they are equally attractive in their own way.

The nylon illustrated shows the great strides which this versatile yarn has made in post-war Britain, e.g., in the shot background and coloured checks with metallic threads. The new rayon brocade of Driver Bros, striking a more formal note, dramatises the use of silver.

Enlarging the market for good design

by Paul Reilly, Chief Information Officer, Council of Industrial Design

SOME READERS MAY have noticed that the Council of Industrial Design has just published its Fifth Annual Report. Some may even have read the opening sentence: "The Council is able to report another year of progress and of quickened interest in the design of British products not only in many manufacturing industries, in the educational world, in voluntary organisations and among the general public, but also, most significantly, in influential sections of the retail trade" and may now be wondering, as they gaze into their local shop windows, on what such optimistic claims can be based.

The Council's report, however, cautiously qualifies this optimism in the next sentence: "In reporting its successes the Council is well aware of the long way it still has to go. Design will excel only when everyone from top management to junior salesman and from producer to consumer believes in it...."

There is still a great deal of truth in Mr Gladstone's advice: "Teach the English to love Beauty, for that is

their greatest need." In the long run it is a question of general education. In the short run it is a question of deciding where to pack the punch, whether to concentrate on the consumer or the producer, whether to put all the eggs in one basket and offer them to the manufacturer or to the retailer or to the school-teacher.

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To some extent the problem is the same in each case, for there is no proven technique of teaching grandmothers to suck good eggs. The manufacturer who is doing good business with a particular product does not relish being told that it should be redesigned; the retailer with his stock turning over at gratifying speed is not impressed when told that his merchandising policy is not keeping pace with the times; and the school-teacher is often so overloaded that any extension of syllabus seems an intolerable imposition. Yet so long as manufacturers are heard confessing that they themselves would not give house-room to what they are making, or so long as retailers take one round their stock saying, "pretty frightful, I know, but it's



RETAIL STAFF TRAINING: "Design as a sales force is a new idea to most retailers." Here, one of the Council's small box exhibitions is being used in a London store's training scheme



PUBLIC INTEREST: Shoppers showed an active interest in design when the Regent Street window-display competition was staged. A crowd round the winning window by RCA students, at Lawley's



what the public wants," or so long as school-teachers show willing if only they had the time and material, there is a job to be done.

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DESIGN is addressed primarily to manufacturers; it is concerned mainly with design policy in industry and product design. The Council's Annual Report covers a wider field and to some extent provides the answer to those manufacturers who argue that there is no point in exhorting industry to review its design policy until the market has been prepared, until the public has been persuaded to demand higher standards.

The Council of Industrial Design has always recognised that promotion of better design, like any other business activity, is subject to the laws of Supply and Demand. That is why there are two main staff divisions in the Council—the Industrial Division to stimulate a supply of good design and the Information Division to stimulate an informed public demand for better design.

The activities of the Industrial Division, such as the compilation of the 1951 Stock List, the recommendation of designers to manufacturers from the Record of Designers, the support given to Design Centres and the general service of design advice, are probably better known to most readers of this journal than is the work of the Information Division in enlarging the market for good design. Yet any indication of change in public taste, any evidence of a critical awakening of consumer demand, deserves the closest attention of the alert manufacturer.

The fact that some 400,000 people visited the Council's exhibition "Design Fair" during its two-year tour of provincial centres of population, or that over 8,000 citizens of Bradford and over 7,000 citizens of Nottingham queued to see this exhibition in a single day in each city, while an average of over 2,000 people attended the public meetings which were held during the local Design Weeks, does not suggest indifference to the subject of design of everyday things. The spontaneous activities which grew out of these Design Weeks, such as the founding of a retailers' design discussion group in Birmingham, the well-supported Midland Industrial Designers' Association, the forthright exhibitions of Good and Bad Design in the Home organised by voluntary effort at Friern Barnet and Welwyn Garden City, all point to a quickened public interest.

But the Gouncil does not build too much on these manifestations. The process of education is slow and laborious. Perhaps the only sure way of raising



DESIGN IN EDUCATION: "Seven Design Folios were bought by some 2,000 schools." Here the Folio on wall-papers, with its attached samples of new and traditional patterns, is in use in a girls' school



EXHIBITIONS IN STORES: At top of page, leaflets which give some indication of the widespread showing of the Council's "Ideas for Your Home" Exhibition of Furnished Rooms. Above, a typical room

standards of public taste is to start at the bottom, to catch the consumer young, before he has lapsed into the lazy habit of liking what he knows rather than knowing what is worth liking. To this end the Council devotes much time and effort in its approach to schools.

The Fifth Annual Report records that the Council mounted displays of teaching material at 71 educational courses and conferences attended by teachers and local education authorities; that seven Design Folios, each containing 12 large pin-up plates of well-designed furniture, pottery, glass, clocks, etc, were bought by some 2,000 schools; that 192 requests for lecturers on design were met from the Council's panel of qualified lecturers, involving a total of 237 lectures in all parts of the country; and that between January and March 1950 11 cities and towns showed small educational exhibitions on textile and pottery design in public libraries and art galleries to which senior pupils from local schools paid organised visits.

This programme of educating the young must continue, but a shorter cut and one that is likely to be of more immediate interest to manufacturers has been the Council's approach to the retail trade. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the retailer holds the key to standards of design and, as is said in the Council's report, "there is evidence that, although design as a sales force is a new idea to most retailers, leaders in the distributive trades today recognise that they hold positions of responsibility in matters of public taste and that in fulfilling these duties they would also build goodwill and encourage future sales."

Council's approach to retailers

The activities of the Council's Retail Section are, in fact, becoming the spearhead of its drive to create an

effective demand for better design. It is logical that in the first stage interest should be concentrated on those consumer-goods which clothe and equip the home. The popular furnished rooms which were shown last April to over 100,000 visitors to the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition were therefore offered to retail stores as a touring exhibition, and since then these carefully chosen furnishings have been displayed in seven towns and cities, from Newcastle in the north to Plymouth in the south. Moreover, other stores in other centres have joined this crusade and have independently mounted displays of merchandise of "1951 Stock List standard." A large association of independent stores is now planning a concerted programme of putting before the public articles that have been accepted for the Stock List, to be followed in 1951 by the high-lighting of goods which will be on view in the official Festival of Britain exhibitions.

Yet, however willing store managements are to give a lead, success or failure must depend very largely on the knowledge and enthusiasm of the sales staff, or, as was written to the Council recently by the head of a northern store, "sales [of good contemporary design] depend to a great extent on an enthusiasm or at least a belief in the idea on the part of executives and sales staff alike."

Training of sales staff up and down the country will be a gargantuan task, but the Council has made a start with two successful courses for furniture salesmen held at Attingham Park, Shropshire. Reporting on the second of these courses, *The Cabinet Maker*, the doyen of the furniture trade press, said: "Those who came converted, went back inspired anew; and the incredulous got food for thought. Difficulties and dangers there may be, but from all parts of the country is coming evidence of a steady growth in the awareness of good design—and an ensuing demand for it." On that the Council rests its case.



The 5th Annual Report of the Council of Industrial Design, discussed in the above article, is obtainable, price 1s 6d, from any bookseller; or 1s 9d post free from His Majesty's Stationery Office, or from the Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SWI

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Regent Street success story

THE TENDENCY TOWARDS contemporary design which we first noted at Liberty's of Regent Street 18 months ago is now more than a tendency: it is a part of this old-established store's policy. It was in July 1949 that the "Young Liberty" shop, bringing together fashions for the younger woman and goods of contemporary design from other departments, was opened. There were new packages, labels, advertisements; but in September of that year DESIGN commented that Liberty's directors "were well aware that a more far-reaching scheme [was] called for." That scheme is now being put into effect: an approach by the firm to the Retail Section of the Council of Industrial Design led to a course of staff-training lectures on design, last March; and in July, Liberty's opened a special section for the sale of contemporary furniture.

The older Liberty customer is becoming interested in the firm's policy of reorientation and the younger generation is definitely attracted. The new section can already be considered a success—although, as Mr Martin stated recently in a talk to other furniture retailers, the shop had been prepared to run it at a loss for the first two years. In practice, it is already proving an excellent medium for encouraging sales of contemporary pottery, glass and fabrics.

S. K. L.



Liberty's contemporary furniture rooms contrast markedly with the imitation Tudor style of older parts of the shop. The buyer for the department, Frank Martin, was largely responsible for the adaptation of the showrooms to enable the furniture to be displayed in an appropriate setting. His staff are all interested in contemporary design; one of them, Kelvin McAvoy, is responsible for the design of several lamps and occasional tables on show. In the room, below, the unusual shape of the carpet and a variety of wall treatments give the impression of individual room settings



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WOODEN TOYS

from six countries

Ingenuity in the design of jointed toys is evident in these examples from Japan, Britain and Italy.

The Japanese pig (1), when dismantled, turns into a quoit-peg with rings. For this purpose, the front legs are plugged on to the tail to form a strut and the pig's backbone becomes the peg, which is extensible. The pig, 8in. long, was designed by Shigeo Hattori of the Industrial Art Institute, Tokyo.

Stanley Noble of Essex has produced a kangaroo (2) complete with removable baby. This toy, made from chest-nut and oak, is turned, carved and painted by hand. It is about 8in. high.

The quality of workmanship and finish of Pinocchio (3) can be judged by the fact that when this photograph was taken he had already been in the possession of a vigorous four-year-old for more than a year. Unfortunately, designer and manufacturer are unknown.

THE WOODEN TOY has a tradition dating back to a time of primitive tools, and the simplifications in design necessary then have been found valid ever since. Instead of a strict realism, reproducing in miniature the grown-up world, the wooden toy provides a symbol, in which the maximum effect is achieved with the least expenditure of labour and material. Wood is moreover a satisfying material for many toys because it has the virtues of hardness and strength without corresponding defects.

Although national differences can be detected in the details of the toys illustrated here, the basic design approach is the same, no matter from which continent the toy comes.

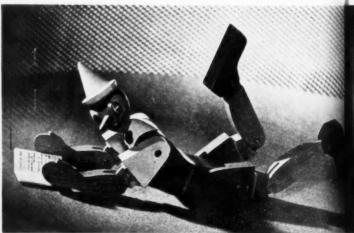
The overseas examples on these pages are a small selection from the Council of Industrial Design's photographic records of well-designed foreign products: these files are freely available for consultation by interested readers. The British examples are taken from the 1951 Stock List.

H. L.

2: BRITAIN

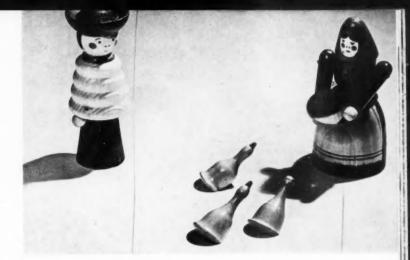


3: ITALY



The human figure is simplified to its essentials in these toys. In Czechoslovakia, J. H. Vitek produced the Three Kings (6) for the State Educational Institute and Vit Grus was responsible for the well-observed geese and their companions (4). Jack and Jill from Pennsylvania (Holgate Toys: 7) have been turned from native hardwoods and can be taken to pieces for reassembly. They show an American polish in contrast with the bucolic quality conveyed—and burlesqued—by the Stanley Noble family (5). The Japanese Kokeshi dolls (8) are traditional toys—probably the most satisfactory shape of all for a small child to grasp.

continued overleaf



5: BRITAIN

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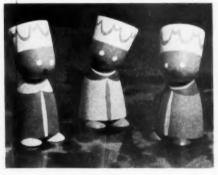
4: CZECHOSLOVAKIA



7: USA (below)



Design: Number 24



6: CZECHOSLOVAKIA



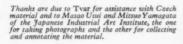


All the vehicles here have the merit of provoking activity; not only have they the minimum requirement of wheels that go round, but each provides a stimulus for additional activity both of manipulation and of imagination. The Czech fire-engine (9) is another design of Vit Grus. The escape-ladder can be raised and the nine firemen can leave the engine to tackle the fire. Kay Bojesen's lorry-drivers (10) are also mobile workers and can supervise the tilting of the beechwood lorry from ground-level. The Japanese truck, which is intended for children aged 4 or 5, is a simple constructional toy that can easily be dismounted; it then fits into the neat assembly shown at right. From the instructions on the wheels, it is intended to be marketed in English-speaking countries. The designer is Shigeo Hattori.



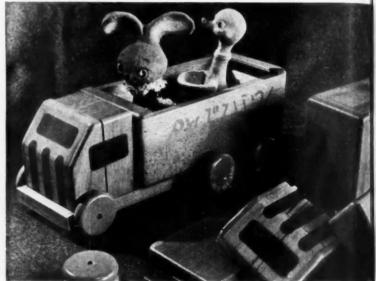
IO: DENMARK

A constructional toy for considerably older children is shown in (12). This farm-waggon is by Jan Pistorius, who has specialised in such toys. (A photograph of his toy racing-car was shown in DESIGN No 12, page 25). In the present instance, as the full-scale farm-waggon was of wood, the toy has followed the constructional detail very closely. It can be usefully compared with the English hay-cart by S. T. (Wembley) Ltd, designed by W. J. Denyer. This uses metal as well as wood and reproduces in miniature a swood and reproduces in miniature a swood is not so widely available as in some other lands.

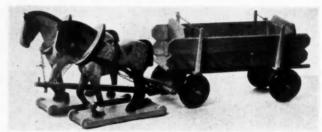




9: CZECHOSLOVAKIA



II: JAPAN



12: CZECHOSLOVAKIA (above)

13: BRITAIN (below)



'The cheap need not be cheap-and-nasty'

by John T. Murray *

ONE OF THE MOST pleasing features of a not invariably pleasant half-century has been the revival of that great nineteenth-century invalid, the Visual Arts. After more than a century of prolific productive activity and acres of stylistic controversy, it has been borne in upon modern man that the simple purpose of artistic endeavour is to produce things which please the senses. Once the fog of moral, political, historical, literary and emotional irrelevancies had been dispersed and the issue had thus been perceived in all its simplicity, it was but a short step to the realisation that the solution of aesthetic problems might also be simple. The pioneers of the modern movement were quick to demonstrate that a simple statement of form and colour could prove at least as pleasing as the timeworn and often elaborate clichés of another age; that to build your own fire was more rewarding than raking old embers. Perhaps because the confusion of the nineteenth century was so intimately bound up with the violent social, technical and economic changes implicit in the new industrial system, it has been through the applied arts, such as architecture and industrial design, that the most telling blows have been struck in the establishment of a style which can please without having to reminisce.

As a student at the Liverpool School of Architecture in the 'thirties, I had the good fortune to study under men who had a deep understanding of the interrelation of architecture and industrial design which was a fundamental tenet of the modern movement and which had found such vigorous expression at the Bauhaus in Germany under Walter Gropius. In 1946, when Clifford Whittaker, Chairman of the Whitehead Group of Companies, invited me to act not only as their architect but also to interest myself in their products, I was therefore fortified, in my decision to accept, by long conviction of the essentially similar nature of the problems posed in architecture and in industrial design. In 1947, after some 12 months' study of the purely technical processes involved, and study also of similar plants in France and Switzerland, I took over the management of D. Whitehead Ltd, which produces well over a million pounds' worth of furnishing fabrics annually. I shall always consider this appointment of a man trained primarily in aesthetics to a job fraught with immense opportunities for the production of commercial disaster, as a great act of faith: faith not in an individual but in an idea—the idea that good design is of vital commercial importance, and that the way to get good design is to put someone with professional design training in a position to say what shall be produced. This idea, which may appear self-evident to some, has so far found little support in British industry—in the older industries in particular.

It is true that a certain amount of lip-service is paid to good design, but the instances in which an ostensible belief is carried into commercial practice are very few; moreover, much of the good design which is produced is confined to the higher price ranges, catering for the statistically insignificant wealthy class. My own firm, on the other hand, caters primarily for those vast sections of humanity in which the emphasis is on cheapness and serviceability rather than on the satisfaction of whimsy at any price. "Cheapness and serviceability" is nowadays almost synonymous with mass production, and to put good design into mass production for the bulk markets is a problem different in kind from producing small quantities for the exclusive minority. But it is a fundamental tenet of the modern faith that the cheap need not be the cheap-and-nasty.

It has been well said that the road to Tibet is a long one if you do not know the road to Tibet; similarly the problem of producing well-designed goods is likely to prove difficult if one has no clear conception of what constitutes good design. The universities reckon to take over five years to instil even the broad outlines of good design into the minds of students who usually have considerable natural ability; the design schools take a similar period; it has therefore been a source of wonder to me that many business men delude themselves into the conviction that they know all about good design when the majority of them have no natural gift in this direction, and most of the remainder

^{*} Director, D. Whitehead Ltd, Rawtenstall; Dip Arch, ARIBA: Holt Travelling Scholar in Design and Goodlass Wall Prizeman in Colour and Decoration, University of Liverpool.



Woven fabrics designed by Margaret Leischner, now being produced by D. Whitehead Ltd. The firm's design policy is equally evident in these and in its new printed fabrics (some of which will be illustrated in DESIGN shortly)

'CHEAP...NOT CHEAP-AND-NASTY'

have no training. If we want good design in this country, the business man must learn to call in a designer and drop the ludicrous conceit that he can handle this side of the business himself.

On the other hand, one must admit that many designers damn the criteria of the commercial world without really knowing the first thing about that world. The vesting of commercial and financial responsibilities in a designer may be said to produce a double advantage; it gives the designer a chance to show industry what he can do, and it gives industry a chance to show the designer what he cannot do. The paramount necessity in any industry is to keep your money turning over: the corollary is that the goods you produce must sell. Unlike the artist, the industrialist cannot wait for posterity to recognise his work; he produces for the present or he ceases to produce at all.

Undoubtedly some of the chief difficulties which the advocate of better design comes up against are inherent in the distribution system. Because those who produce need their financial resources to purchase plant and buildings, raw materials and labour, and cannot afford to have more than a small proportion of their money tied up in finished goods, a separate unit—the distributor—is required to finance the finished product during the period before it reaches the hands of the customer. Moreover—and this is particularly

true of bulk producers—the producer cannot efficiently produce the wide range of goods which the complex distribution system ultimately offers the customer. Those who would remove the obstacles to good design which are inherent in the distribution system, by trying to do away with the system, would burn down the house to roast the pig.

I am, however, convinced that the situation wherein the distributor is unwilling to take financial risks with design, and rarely buys any product which is not immediately recognisable on past performance as a good seller, must be changed. The consequence of the present system is that the consumer, who might readily buy the new design which the producer would like to produce, never sees it because the distributor will not give the producer an order for it; instead, the consumer is offered ad nauseam a range of articles which generations of wholesale and retail buyers have been taught to regard as safe sellers. (The designs for these were probably first bastardised from hand products in the not artistically auspicious era of our great-great-grandparents, and have since been "modernised" from time to time at the dictates of people who, whatever commercial virtues they might possess, knew little or nothing about design.)

Some way or ways must be found to bring the consumer and the producer into closer touch; at the same time producers and distributors must be encouraged to risk some portion of their financial resources on designs which are not certain sellers. I believe that the Council of Industrial Design and similar bodies can do a great deal by showing the public what can be made, and thus producing a demand for good design; they can also show the producer what has been done by others in his own field and they can give publicity to good design wherever and whenever it is commercially successful. But the beginnings of a solution must be traced even further back. Britain needs more good designers, not pontificating from ivory towers but down in the hurly-burly of industry, helping to decide what shall be made: she needs them in the distribution system, giving sympathetic support to manufacturers who are producing good designs; she needs them in Press and publicity organisations, almost literally opening the public eye to good design; perhaps, most of all, she needs them in board rooms, helping to put money behind good design, in order that we in Western Europe, whose economic and social system is today so seriously challenged, may assert emphatically and gloriously in the coming half-century, heralded by the Festival of Britain, that the processes of making money and making fine things are not mutually exclusive.

Wooden horse about 8 in. long; painted red, with mane and tail in the natural wood

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Designed by architect Gunnar Ander for peasant wood-carvers

Homecrafts and industrial design can flourish side by side

Report from Scandinavia: by K. S. Woods *

FEW WHO HAVE visited private homes as well as hotels, schools and other buildings in Scandinavia would deny the generally high standard of taste in interior decoration. Perhaps it is not yet sufficiently realised how many of the fabrics that contribute to the charm and cheerfulness of these interiors are handwoven. Hand-made floor coverings, bedding and table-linen, colourful curtains and upholstery, all help to enliven contemporary rooms. The rebuilt hotels in the north of Norway, for example, are equipped with modern furniture and hand-woven textiles in place of the heavy plush-and-mahogany styles of those destroyed by the Germans.

Interior decoration forms part of the training of Swedish architects. The result is an admirable faculty for harmonising various components into a satisfactory whole. There is no doubt of the powerful influence of tradition: folk-museums reveal the quiet elegance of modest homes of the past, and by adapting the native tradition in furniture, artist-craftsmen have led the way to modern factory design. These homely, dignified styles lend themselves to the economies imposed by mass-production. Furniture of birch and pine, depending for its effect on line tather than ornament, and on the natural grain shown

to advantage in unstained or lightly stained surfaces, is vastly more pleasing than the elaborately carved and french-polished imitations of former styles—imported, like most of the timbers of which they were made—on which craftsmen's time and skill is still being expended.

In the Scandinavian home, contemporary furniture is saved from bare austerity by the pleasing textiles, pottery and glass that accompany it. In all these domains, handwork holds its own along with mass-produced goods. Textiles, like furniture, are often based on traditional designs, and the study of old techniques forms an important part of the work in advanced weaving schools; peasant art, moreover, is still a living tradition in certain areas. But handweavers are constantly adapting the old techniques to new ideas, tastes and materials, and much weaving is definitely contemporary in design.

One reason why handwork survives in countries with small populations is that a very few modern

^{*} Miss Woods spent several months in Norway, Sweden and Finland, carrying out a first-hand investigation into craft work and small-scale industry in those countries. She has studied design in relation to craftsmanship at home and abroad, and is the author of Rural Crafts of England (Harrap) and Rural Industries Round Oxford (Oxford University Press).





"Weavers are constantly adapting old techniques to new ideas, tastes and materials." Above, upholstery fabrics partly woven with glass yarn; designed by Astrid Sampe-Hultberg and woven in the N K (Nordiska Kompaniet) Textile Studio "Contemporary furniture is saved from austerity by the textiles and pottery that accompany it." Left, cabinet designed by Bjorn Engo and made by Mobelindustri, Norway, 1947

HOMECRAFTS AND INDUSTRIAL DESIGN continued

highly productive factories are sufficient to supply the whole home market with standard goods; the demand for goods outside the popular lines must be met by individual producers or by small workshops. For example, a single earthenware and a single porcelain factory supply the whole of Norway, so far as factory ware of Norwegian origin is concerned, and even these have to go in for a variety of lines. Therefore the work of studio potters is encouraged and cherished. to bring freshness and variety into the market. The same is true of Finnish glass and pottery, which is made in small studios and large factories. Outside Helsinki is the factory "Arabia," whose workers are numbered in thousands. Arabia exports to 30 countries besides supplying the home market. As in the renowned glass and pottery works of Sweden. artists in the firm's employ occupy studios on the premises where they can carry on their individual creative work with their own hands. They are free to design or not for reproduction in the factory, getting a commission on sales of designs that are put into production. This system keeps the artist in close touch with the mechanical and chemical changes and with the economic principles on which the factory is run. At the same time it gives opportunities to the factory personnel to understand the artist's values.

At Borås, Sweden's principal cotton manufacturing centre, the students at the Technical Institute are put through somewhat elaborate courses on a variety of hand-looms, in traditional and in modern techniques, working out designs that they learn to prepare for power-looms. Jacquard looms for brocades and other fabrics are worked by hand and the cards are prepared on the premises for a number of factories. In this town a large factory that supplies a very strong staple cotton material for men's overalls also designs and prints great quantities of cotton and cellulose fabrics for the season's popular trade. While such fabrics fulfil the general desire for new fashions, the demand for more durable and distinctive fabrics, especially for household use, is met in the shops where hand-printed fabrics and home-woven goods are sold.

Promoters of hand-craft expect some contraction, since much of the expansion of recent years is due to shortages caused by war and its aftermath; but they have a firm belief in the continued place of handwork in the national economy. The fundamental fact is that handwork in the domestic arts stands in its own right, not only as creating prototypes for the machine.





In the Scandinavian countries, "handwork holds its own along with mass-produced goods." The rice-grain transparent pottery, of Chinese inspiration (above, left), is produced at the Arabia factory near Helsinki. The designer is Friedl Kjellberg. The glass vase on right is an example of the work of Tapio Wirkkala; made by Karhula-Iittala, Finland, 1948. Photographs on this page and p 17 by Wren Studios

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Above, centre: egg-shell green beaker with solid base of browns and maroons, designed by Hilkka Säynäjärvi, made at the Arabia works. On either side is buff glazed slipware of traditional Finnish design, made by Vieno Ahonen. The background is a lake-green hand-woven scarf by Boije, dyed in the fleece; carded and spun at Kotivilla Oy, Ekenäs, Finland, on the Fitzpatrick machine (made by H. F. Textiles in Sussex)

The two branches are complementary rather than competitive, each fulfilling needs that would otherwise go unsatisfied. Homecrafts are not merely something rustic and old-fashioned with a picturesque appeal to tourists (though this element exists). They are firmly based on genuine demand, and also on the workers' needs for winter occupation, for well-made articles to use at home, and for the cash that sales bring in. Thus they enable the craftsmen to buy modern industrial products such as electric stoves and irons, bicycles, fashionable clothes and so on, promoting general trade.

The survival and development of the crafts did not come about spontaneously; it has been due to the deliberate policy and devoted work, over several generations, of people who believed intensely in their value to the national life, who had the ability to make use of favourable economic circumstances and the patience to combat unfavourable ones. They saw that handwork was fast disappearing before the tide of factory goods that came in the wake of the railways. These cheap goods won popularity, and the poorer kinds of hand-made goods were no longer required. Therefore the emphasis was firmly placed upon quality, whether for home use or for sale. The attention to home requirements gives a sound utility basis and direct experience of the standards required for

hard, practical use. This is seen especially in the woodwork of Norway, where the remote farmer depends for efficiency and for relief from the onerous conditions of mountain sites on being able to make his own farm and household equipment according to the best possible design. The provision of improved designs is therefore an important part of Norway's homecraft movement, and the Homecraft retail centre in Oslo gives abundant evidence of good design and workmanship.

There need be no antagonism between the factory and the hand-worker in standards of design; the craft worker's design should suit the more varied skill of the individual worker, while the industrial designer has a complex organisation of workers, machinery and business to take into account. Is it too much to say that the future quality of our homes depends largely on the extent to which each type of production develops along its own lines? Industry, in a healthy economy, can enrich the community with money and with convenience that enable it to pursue the arts if it so desires. Will our population of the future want works of art sufficiently for them to be produced? This is a field not only for far-seeing education, but for imaginative adventure in market research, that will look ahead at the results of education and will cease to confuse luxury with quality.

EXPERIMENT IN CO-OPERATION

Architects and factory designers worked together in the evolution of a range of sanitary ware for schools, now being extended to meet domestic needs also

by Alan and Bryan Adams *

A WELCOME STIMULUS has recently been given to our works designers. The stereotyped wash basin has been produced year after year with perhaps insufficient thought given to its purpose and suitability for the work it must do. It is true that some of our well-known designs are named modestly after certain famous architects for whom they were produced, but no one but ourselves knows what such mystic characters as the *R.T.* closet or the *Three Bells* urinal stand for, and even these things tend to be forgotten in the mists of time.

Let us, therefore, outline the creation of the first architecturally-designed school wash basin.

A year or so ago, the Hertfordshire County Authority asked if we were willing to collaborate with them in the production of a small school wash basin which must suit the child's needs in all possible ways, have certain architectural features in its design, and—by no means least—be simple and easy to manufacture. This is where we sanitary fireclay men came into the picture.

Fireclay is not like some other materials out of which mass-produced things are made. Very expensive machinery and preparations are unnecessary; our medium is not only plastic but pliable, and our outlook on production problems is, we believe, equally elastic. Moreover, our firm has always been interested in new ideas, having produced, during the past 75 years, a great number of individual and sometimes original things. The opportunity to approach the problem of design in a new way appealed to us strongly, as we felt it would let new light into, and give more purpose to, our work.

Imagine us, therefore, the architects and the sanitary fireclay men, in that holy of holies, the architect's office—that sanctum whereunto the fireclay man can seldom penetrate except in fear and trembling. We sprawled uncomfortably on the floor (all other available space being occupied by plans and drawings), bent over large sheets of paper.

Points under review were many; we required:

A reasonable size, combined with good bowl area, so that each child might have accommodation in a minimum of space;

Clean and simple lines, with absence of needless rebates, corners and frills;

Suitable positioning of tap or taps for accessibility and ready cleansing;

Good accommodation for soap, which must be kept dry by suitable drainage;

Beauty of line and contour.

The general features being thus roughly planned, the next meeting was in our moulding shop in the North (named on the spot "The Studio"), where modellers, long skilled in clay craft, vetted the new design and brought suggested outlines and contours into line with practical considerations of manufacture. It was a new and glorious sight for us to see architects building, shaping and scraping away at the clay models, absorbed in the joys of creation, and oblivious of the passing of time and the luncheon hour. Here was a sight indeed to astonish the sanitary fireclay man! These high task-masters, these Olympians, who for long sad years had scornfully declined our approach and firmly but politely returned our visiting cards, were here handling our base clay, indeed covered with its dust, attired in old flannel bags, with pipes in mouths, discussing the pleasures and pains of the craft and deferring to the superior skill and knowledge of the old modeller, who was pleased to demonstrate his skill and impart to them his knowledge, gained in over 50 years' work in the industry.

Discussion ranged over many things—the hewing

^{*} Directors, Adamsez Ltd, London and Scotswood-on-Tyne. Acknowledgment is gladly made of the co-operation of C. H. Aslin, FRIBA (chief architect, Hertfordshire County Council), S. A. W. Johnson-Marshall, ARIBA, and David L. Medd, ARIBA, the architects concerned.



PRODUCER: The factory modeller with the model from which moulds were made for the new school basin

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USERS: First batch of basins, installed in one of the new schools of the Hertfordshire Education Authority

of the clay, its preparation and admixture with *grog* (not a pleasant beverage, but the name given to burnt clay), the mysteries of slip casting, plaster mould making, engobe and glaze mixtures and application, and the test of the kiln, in which temperatures reach 1250°C. and any weakness in construction or design is shown up. At the same time, sketches were quickly prepared, measurements taken, contours checked and, by the time the night train carried our friends away, the model was roughed out to everybody's satisfaction.

The next stage was to reproduce the new design in a finished form so that moulds could be made from it. Before they were cast, this final version was packed with great care and sent southwards so that it might come under architects' scrutiny once more.

Thus did the Bean school basin come to life.

We, as manufacturers, were naturally concerned to see that the basin should be suitable for universal use and could be offered with confidence for other purposes besides school work. It has been encouraging to find that, on inclusion in our catalogue, it has been chosen for factories, public buildings and domestic purposes, its crowning achievement being selection for the Royal Festival Hall.

The experiment in combined operations was felt to be so helpful that the idea was extended. Now, an entirely new type of school urinal has been evolved in much the same way, the first design being tried out boldly in a number of modern schools. The youngsters responded well to the challenge, demonstrating that they were as quick to adapt themselves to the demand for cleanliness as the designers could desire. Their experience led to slight modifications, so it may be said that the children themselves contributed in no small way to the success of the operations.

We are, we think, fortunate that our paths have led us to follow the ancient clay craft; the craft which has served humanity for centuries, from the early days when neolithic man made rough clay pots, through the times of ancient civilisations when poets, artists, philosophers and historians used clay for writing upon, for sculpture, for pottery. "Go to, now," said the builders of the town of Babel, "let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." Today, our methods have not changed greatly. Clay work is still a handicraft and calls forth that individual skill which helps to satisfy the creative urge in all of us.



DEVELOPMENT: The Bean basin was originally designed in a small size and with a single tap delivering water at a moderate, controlled temperature. From the school version has been developed this new domestic version, of normal size and fitted with two taps of standard pattern

A new technique for nameplates

Injection-moulded plates incorporate recessed lettering and designs

NAMEPLATES IN PLASTICS, which incorporate three-dimensional lettering or designs, are a new product of Wilmot-Breeden Ltd (Birmingham). The method of production used for these plates appears to be equally suitable for dials, control knobs, or the keys of typewriters or calculating machines.

One's first impression of the new nameplates is of solid raised lettering behind a clear plastic "window." The "window" is, in fact, the front surface of a solid block of transparent plastic material in which hollow letters are recessed from the back. They appear to be solid because they are sprayed with colour or coated with metal; but this again is applied from the back, inside their hollow shapes.

The material used is a clear acrylic (Diakon) and it is shaped by injection moulding. Different colours can be sprayed on to different parts of the back, provided of course that the parts which are not to be sprayed with any particular colour are closely and accurately masked while it is being applied elsewhere. Alternatively, metals such as aluminium or copper can be deposited—using, we are told, an evaporation process under high vacuum. The whole of the back, including the recessed parts, is then sprayed with a sealing coat (which does not show at the front).

th

There are certain limitations on the use of Wilmot-Breeden's plates—mainly limitations that arise from the characteristics of the acrylic material from which they are made. It has a critical temperature of about 140 deg. Fahrenheit, and it will not resist such abrasive materials as sand (though the exposed surface, if scratched, can be repolished). Some liquids have a harmful effect on the material or on the sprayed back. The latter, however, is usually well protected once the plate is fixed in position.

A number of fixing methods are suitable. To many materials, the nameplates can be glued direct, using a special adhesive. They can, alternatively, be





The solid-looking lettering and lion of the nameplate above, left, are seen in a back view, right, to be in fact hollow recesses. The whole plate is a one-piece injection-moulding. Colour is sprayed, and metal on the central part of the plate deposited, from the back. In the experimental design above, the plate is encircled by a plated metal bezel, which could be used as a means of attachment

screwed in position—but not without detriment to their appearance as the screws are visible in the transparent material. Perhaps a better method is to use small spigots, moulded in the rear surface; these show from the front as deep holes, and they should be confined to areas of dark colour, unless they can be incorporated in the design—e.g., as punctuation marks in the lettering. A method of fixing which enhances the appearance of the nameplates is to attach them indirectly, by mounting them in bezels or end-pieces of metal or moulded plastics.

When all limitations are recognised, the new method still offers a very wide scope for design. Almost any colour can be used, including metallic paints; and metals, either sprayed or deposited, can be introduced without fear of tarnishing, since they are sealed-in. The background areas can be textured to heighten the contrast with the recessed parts. Different depths of recessing can be incorporated in the same moulding, so that letters of different heights can, if desired, have corresponding differences of depth. Moreover, the recesses need not be flat, as in the examples illustrated, but can be modelled.

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There are no limits on the shape of the nameplate; its front and back surfaces need not be parallel—the back can be flat and the front domed or sloped. The

COLORATOR

Mounted with two chromium plated end-pieces, the nameplate on a refrigerator looks like this. Its tapered thickness counteracts distortion of letter-forms seen, as these are, from above

COLDRATOR

This is the injection-moulded plate before mounting

COLDRATOR

And here it is seen as it comes from the mould, before spraying with colour (in this instance, white for the hollow letters, dark blue for the background)

nameplate for the Coldrator refrigerator, for example, is tapered from broad base to narrow top, because it is designed for mounting well below eye-level and this tapered shape avoids distortion of the letter-forms.

As with all plastic mouldings, the tool costs are considerable—averaging, we are told, "a few hundred pounds." The new nameplates are therefore most suitable for fairly long runs; large quantities can bring the unit cost down to a few pence. A. D.

Wood panelling is plastic-sprayed for protection

RAILWAYS AND SHIPBUILDERS are the first users of SaR-ReZ panelling, which embodies a new finish developed by Saro Laminated Wood Products Ltd (Whippingham, Isle of Wight). The finish is a synthetic resin; it is sprayed on to wood which is then stoved under radiant heat, passing on a conveyor belt through an infra-red heating installation-developed by GEC in collaboration with Saro-which includes 216 reflector lamps. The solvents in the resin evaporate and a fully polymerised plastic surface is left. This can be transparent, allowing a decorative veneer to show through, or it can be pigmented: any plain colour may then be employed. When the finish dries, it is hard but resilient, blister-proof and fire-resistant. It can be polished to any degree required, and can easily be touched-up.

The base of the panelling is timber—plywood, blockboard, kerfed board—in any size or thickness, but the surface must be specially sanded. The cost is 25 3d per square foot above the cost of the wood.

Suggested applications include panelling in caravans, ships' cabins and galleys, bathrooms, hospitals.



SaR-ReZ panelling in new London Transport rolling stock built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd

In the home market, Saro are selling the finished panelling; abroad they are prepared to sell licences to use the finishing process. A finish having similar properties but air-drying, without the need for radiant heat, is now being developed for use by customers.

Industrial Design Abstracts

Ceramics: "There's more to colour than meets the eye." The part of colour in the ceramics industry and the technical problems inherent in its use are considered in detail by industrialists, research staff and retailers. Colour is growing increasingly in importance in pottery (including fine china), and in kitchen, bathroom and hospital equipment. Structural glass, too, is often coloured. The matching of replacement parts, however, makes coloured equipment costly, and the public is often wary about buying.

Colour co-ordination and co-operation between artist and technician is essential. There are beginning to be available sets of colour samples for underglaze and overglaze colour and for body and glaze colour which will prevent the designer from using colours the technician cannot match. *Geramic Industry*, Chicago, July, August, September, October 1950.

Crafts: "The Knitter's Craft," by James Norbury, chief designer, Patons and Baldwins Ltd. Historical survey. Design is regarded "not as something imposed on the fabric" but inherent in its development—often utilitarian in origin. (Paper read to the Royal Society of Arts, 6 December 1950.)

Electrical Equipment: "Today's Meters," by George A. Van Brunt. Brief survey of some improvements in meters and electrical instruments which are described as being lighter in weight, stronger, more accurate and more flexible than previous equipment. Factory, New York, October 1950.

Exhibitions: "Europe's Trade Fairs," by Lord Verulam. Visits to various 1950 industrial fairs give rise to comments on the standards of display and design in the goods displayed. At Milan the quality of design in Italian glass, silks, pottery and office machinery seemed outstanding; on the other hand, well-made coffee fountains were tastelessly decorated. Design of individual buildings was good, the arrangement of their contents often poor. The layout of St Eric's Fair, Stockholm, was handicapped by poor buildings, but domestic and electrical equipment, toys and furniture seemed excellent in design and construction. The Swiss Fair was full of new techniques and designs and a

high standard of typographical and stand design was universal. The BIF is too casual, by comparison, in its restaurant, writing-room facilities, etc; many of the goods exhibited seem rubbish in themselves, badly displayed. The Manager, October 1950.

Furniture: "Furniture Without Frills," by H. G. McMillan. Neil B. Morris is a young furniture designer who is also head of a major plant. He considers design and development of vital importance and in his own factory the development staff outnumbers the production side. The entrance of engineering into the furniture industry seems to him of first importance and likely to have major results in the next 10 to 15 years, although there is a serious time-lag before knowledge of new practices is incorporated in the tuition given under Further Education schemes. He finds retailers out of touch with the latest trends which they should be able to expound to their customers. Business, October 1950.

Furniture: "Italian Slatted Furniture," designed by Augusto Romano. Much of it is demountable. 9 illustrations. Wood, October 1950.

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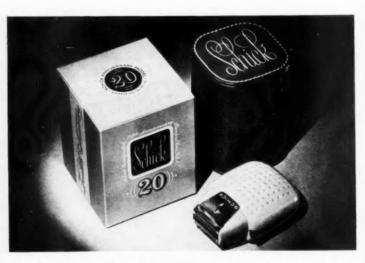
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Furniture: "Modernes Wohnen," by Wilhelm Fehlinger. Much Viennese furniture is designed for show rather than use, and is too big for present-day small flats. The author thinks that an acquaintance with simple, practical furniture should be fostered at school, at evening classes, in newspaper articles, on the wireless, and in permanent exhi-Furniture retailers offering well-designed furniture should be helped by subsidies and be given distinctive signboards, and at the Vienna Trade Fair approved types of furniture should be shown separately. Aufbau, Vienna, September 1950.

General: A special number of Techniques et Architecture is devoted to l'art d'habiter. Charlotte Perriand examines the fundamentals of eating, ventilation, hygiene and storage, and the equally vital problems of social intercourse, relaxation, general surroundings and the children's domain. Each of these aspects of living is examined in relation to the customs of East and West. Profusely illustrated with solutions both historical and modern. Techniques et Architecture, Paris, No 9-10, 1950.

General: The Market for Imported Consumer Goods in the United States. This booklet informs Western European



USA: The Schick 20 electric razor has been launched on the American market at a retail price of \$24.50. Measuring less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ in \times $2\frac{1}{2}$ in, it is claimed to be the lightest electric shaver available. The dimpled indentations give a non-slip grip; the covers at the side of the blade open for cleaning. The razor, case and package were all designed by Carl Otto

manufacturers of market opportunities in the USA in 14 groups of products. The importance of a knowledge of American demands in design is again emphasised. National Retail Dry Goods Association; Association of Buying Offices, New York, 1950.

General: "The role of the industrial designer." A discussion between the designer Henry Dreyfuss and two of his assistants and the Editors of Product Engineering makes the point (among others) that the five factors industrial designers must consider are convenience of use, ease of maintenance, cost, merchandising competition, and appearance. Product Engineering, New York, September 1950.

General: "Working Heights for School Children." Three charts give in inches average working heights for furniture, equipment, built-in fixtures and building appurtenances. Architectural Record, New York, October 1950.

Glass: "Orrefors, Industrial Idyl." A chapter extracted from Hudson Strode's book "Sweden's Model for a World" describes the organisation of Orrefors glassworks and some of the pieces they have produced. Orrefors Review, Sweden, No 4–5, 1950.

Graphic art: Portfolio 2. This new American magazine is devoted mainly to the graphic arts and ranges from cattle-brands as graphic design to photographs of the Philadelphia Mummers Parade. People whose work is described include Charles Coiner, art director of the N. W. Ayer advertising agency; Joseph Low, artist in linoleum prints; Charles Eames, furniture designer; and William Steig, one of the cartoonists of the New Yorker. There are also articles on the Vari-Typer, on Advertising Art in 1900, and on the wallpapers of Katzenbach and Warren Inc. Portfolio, Cincinnati, No 2, 1950.

Lighting: "Good Lighting can be Good Looking." A pictorial review of new American fixtures for dining-room, living-room and kitchen, including lights inside wardrobes and set into the sides of staircases at low level. House and Garden, Greenwich, Connecticut, October 1950.

Plastics: "Plastics Moulding Tools Export Scheme," by Dr V. E. Yarsley. One of the handicaps of the plastics moulding industry is the high cost of moulds, which have often had to be discarded owing to changing demands of fashion long before they were worn out. Tool Exchange, a new organisation for the export of surplus British moulding tools to Commonwealth and Continental



GREAT BRITAIN: From a booklet recently issued by Blackburn and General Aircraft Ltd, Brough, East Yorkshire, comes this photograph of the GAL 60 transport aircraft. The unusual shape of this machine has been determined by its purpose—the carriage of heavy and bulky loads. The tail is placed high to enable vehicles to approach the rearbading ramp from any angle: they can then be driven aboard. The ramp is hydraulically operated, hinged doors close over it when retracted. The wing span is 162ft

plastics moulders, has worked out a scheme to reduce these losses by supplying British tools abroad on a royalty basis. "It is essential that all moulds offered should be of good design." A probable result is that British manufacturers may be less inclined to overwork their moulds, and therefore greater variety will be given to moulded goods on the home market. The Times Review of Industry, October 1950.

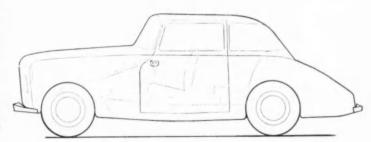
Printing: "Little Man' your printing could be good," by Christopher Foss. Practical account of the expansion of a small jobbing printer's business on the basis of good typographical design and careful presswork. *The British Printer*, November–December 1950.

Printing: "Typography for Silk Screen," by Peter Mytton-Davies. An analysis of the factors important in obtaining good typographical silk-screen reproduction. Sanserif type-faces reproduce best. It is suggested that type-faces might be designed specially for this process. Supplement to World's Press News, 27 October 1950.

Railways: "Improvements in Rolling Stock Design." Summary, drawn up at the Fifteenth International Railway Congress, of improvements made by the countries represented for the comfort of passengers (sound proofing, lighting, heating, stability). The Railway Gazette, 29 September 1950.

Ships: "Le Liberté et sa Décoration," by Pierre Imbourg. Interior decoration of the new French liner Liberté. 34 pages of photographs. Mobilier et Décoration, Paris, October 1950.

Watches: "Modern Watch Designs," by Giles Merton. The present trend in British watch design is towards simplicity, with the simple round case as the most favoured shape. The jewelled watch, however, used as a dress accessary, appears in a wide variety of forms, as a fob-watch, and in rings, bracelets and necklaces; it is often made part of a matching suite of jewellery. The choice of gems for jewelled watches shows a developing use of colour, and many stones are used, often emphasising the colours of an enamelled dial or case. Argentor, September 1950.



DENMARK: Plastics are used extensively in this prototype car by two Danish designers, Sigvard Bernadotte and Acton Björn—which has a Bradford (Jowett) engine. A weight reduction of 10–15 per cent is claimed, and where plastics are used painting is rendered unnecessary. The windscreen, curved at the top and sides, gives a wide field of view. A sound-insulation system is claimed to eliminate engine and wind noises

Management discusses design

Good design "must be seen throughout the whole selling operation"

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN appeared for the first time on the agenda of the British Institute of Management, at its autumn conference at Harrogate. "Design and its contribution towards economic production and marketing" was discussed by a number of speakers, including—on the platform—Geoffrey Dunn, of Dunns of Bromley; F. J. Stratton, managing director of Upsons Ltd (Dolcis); A. Whitaker, consulting engineer and a director of Powered Mountings Ltd; and Robin Darwin, Principal of the Royal College of Art.

Mr Dunn (whose family has been dealing in furniture since 1710) said that, although his customers were nearly all from the lower income groups, he found no difficulty in selling them properly designed furniture in competition with "moderne" stuff-the workmanship of which, in his experience, was frequently as bad as the appearance. His customers required that furniture must work, that it should last, and that it should be individual in appearance. To satisfy these requirements he had found it essential "to get the designers out of the back room into the board room."

In the shoe trade, Mr Stratton said, good design was also good business. The fundamental design of a shoe, based as it was on the shape of the human foot, could not be changed; but frequent variations on the theme (i.e., fashion) widened markets and stimulated turnover. Good design must not stop at the article itself; "its handwriting must be seen throughout the whole selling operation," in advertising, window display, shop decoration and architecture. In this way the public could be educated to demand good design—and no business could afford to go too far ahead of public taste.

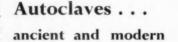
Mr A. Whitaker's theme was that a design for mass production must be a synthesis of the ideas of a number of specialists—designers, engineers and salesmen; it must be complete in every detail beforehand, if the full economies of mass production were to be obtained. In his experience, this ideal could be achieved only by a team controlled by a chief who understood both design and engineering. As an engineer, he regretted that his profession was not being given a more liberal education.

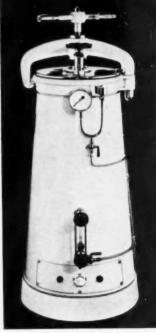
Mr Darwin spoke of the divorce between art and science as a major disaster; he believed that no good industrial design was possible unless the two partners were reunited. He mentioned his plan for establishing at Coleshill a centre at which artists and scientists might each learn something of the other's problems. The top or executive designer must have a broad understanding of technical processes if he was to explain his ideas to the departments responsible for carrying them out. Good industrial design must draw its inspiration from the fine arts.

In subsequent discussion, E. H. Sealy (Urwick, Orr and Partners) suggested that the platform had ignored the fact that standardised designs were essential to the reduction of maintenance costs. P. Snell, of Walter Pollard (1923) Ltd, believed it would be more valuable for the artist to get acquainted with industry than for the engineer to try and meet art half-way.

Mr Stratton's view that the public was ultimately responsible for bad design was contested, speakers arguing that the retailer was the villain of the piece. In reply, Mr Stratton urged the joint responsibility of manufacturer, retailer and consumer; he believed that each could educate the other. Another speaker maintained that it was the duty of industry, in Professor Goodhart Rendel's words, to "give your patron the good thing behind the bad thing he is asking for." Replying to Professor J. V. Conolly (College of Aeronautics), who had demanded a generally accepted canon of good design, Dr R. S. Edwards (Chairman of the Council of Industrial Design and of the North Eastern Gas Board), pointed out that design could not be precisely defined because it varied with the varying trends of its age. C.R.J.

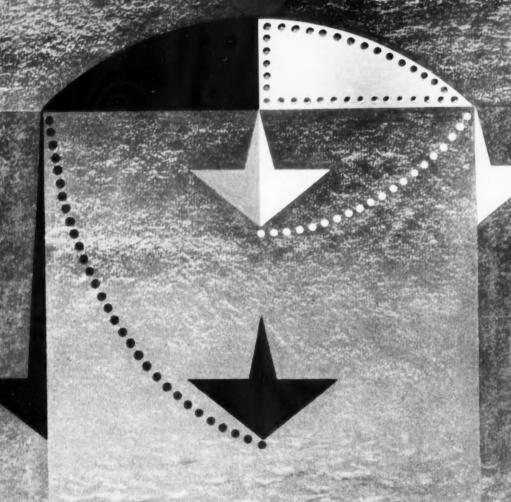






MOST AUTOCLAVES (chambers in which objects can be sterilised under pressure) have the torture-chamber look of the illustration above, left; not so the new model designed by Frank A. York, consulting engineer, made by Chatwood Safe and Engineering Co Ltd, Shrewsbury. Close attention has been given to ease of maintenance—it is claimed that a new gasket can be fitted in a few moments. This autoclave is made in two sizes and can be heated by electricity, gas or steam; potential users include hospitals and clinics as well as industrial laboratories.

A.GAMES



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This Winsor and Newton Ostwald Circle colour box sets a new standard in paint box design. The 'circle' theme is to conform to the theory of the Ostwald colour system in which the colours are arranged chromatically equidistant. The box is moulded in Beetle by Illingworths (Plastics) Ltd. Note how the radial divisions between the paint containers and palettes form natural strengthening ribs.

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AMINOPLASTIC

Frank discussion of design problems is helpful to industry

SIR: A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of presiding at a "Brains Trust" organised by the Midland Industrial Designers' Association for the benefit of Birmingham jewellers and silversmiths.

My object in writing this letter is to impress upon chairmen and secretaries of design associations in other regions how valuable such meetings can be to almost every industry in the country. The primary object of the Birmingham meeting was to bring manufacturers and designers in the industry together for full and frank discussion of the problems peculiar to it; and, more especially, to get Birmingham and Midland designers to appreciate the value of the local Association which can look after their interests effectively if it is made really strong in terms of membership. The meeting was most successful-the attendance of manufacturers and designers was excellent and a number of good ideas emerged during the evening.

I had as experts four leading employers in the industry, and we had the advantage of the presence on the platform of Stanley Wright, Director of Design at the Design and Research

The industry covers four distinct trades—namely, the manufacture of: (1) fine diamond and gem jewellery, (2) imitation or costume jewellery, (3) sterling silverware; and (4) electroplated ware. Beauty of design is its very life-blood, and the value of such a meeting cannot be over-estimated.

To give an idea of the kind of suggestion which developed during the debate: one which aroused discussion was the advisability of groups of small concerns employing a first-class designer as a joint enterprise. There was good discussion also on the advisability of designers of costume jewellery discussing and possibly co-ordinating fashion trends with manufacturers in kindred industries; on making more intelligent use of the services of the Design and Research Centre: on the impossibility of manufacturers in this country competing with the Americans in mass-produced articles, and the consequent need to concentrate on fine quality craft work, in which we stand supreme. These are only a few of the problems investigated. In fact, we could not get through the scheduled list of questions, so animated and provocative were the discussions.

It is my intention to convey the sense of the suggestions which emerged to the Development Council that has been set up in the industry, in order that it may give assistance in the advancement of design and the encouragement of designers. I hope that the industry will benefit equally with the designers themselves.

IVAN SHORTT

Managing Director, Ellis and
Co Ltd.

Birmingham 18

Trials of the architect

SIR: Richard B. Hornby says that "retribution should be heaped on the architectural profession, which lacks the ability to lead in the world of design," and he cites recent Government-sponsored office blocks as instances of bad architecture (DESIGN, No 22, p 26). Many architects agree with him about these particular buildings, some of which have been subjected to severe criticism in the architectural press. But it is not fair to blame all architects; most of us try hard to be sincere in our work, and I submit that there have been many worthy modern schools, factories and houses built since the war.

The architect can never do exactly as he likes, for he takes instructions from his client and the client shares the blame or the credit for every building. Assume that the client wishes to build a new factory and offices, that he is enterprising and has a modern outlook, and that he and his architect see eye-to-eye. Even so, before work can start, the following official bodies will have to be satisfied: Ministry of Town and Country Planning, Ministry of Supply (or other sponsoring Ministry), Board of Trade, Central Land Board, Ministry of Transport (probably), Ministry of Works, and the Local Authority. Each can make observations which might involve complete re-design of the build-

It might well take a year before preliminary negotiations were complete, and a licence to build would then only be available in a case with high priority. If by this time the site is still for sale and no alternative ready-built accommodation has been found, the client may instruct the architect to make drawings and obtain tenders for the work. There will be many conflicting technical claims to be reconciled, and during the whole time tight control must be kept if a well-designed building is to result. Prices meanwhile have been steadily rising and only a public authority or a determined private client will face building at all. Anything experimental will meet with little favour; so much capital is being invested.

If the work goes ahead, every ounce of energy on the part of builder and architect will be required to overcome such hazards as shortages of building materials and labour. It will be necessary to use substitute materials, and recrimination will follow if they fail to stand up to wear. All the time a watch must be kept on the cost, or client, architect and builder may find themselves in court for breaking the law.

When the building is finished, it will

Waiting-room in a new factory designed by L. K. Watson, writer of the letter above, for Reliance (Nameplates) Ltd. Ernest Race furniture; carpet designed by the architect



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued

have to be equipped. The client may feel like "making-do" with his old furniture, or, if he has to buy new, he may insist on "Utility" to avoid purchase tax. The architect will wish to help in the selection of furniture and furnishings, but it will involve much hard work, from which he will almost certainly make no profit.

When, therefore, we see a well-designed and well-equipped modern building, it should be hailed as an achievement. If we are not satisfied, we should consider who has failed. The problem for architects is much the same as for all designers—they must carry the public with them.

LESSLIE K. WATSON,
MBE, TD, MA, FRIBA, AMTPI
London WCI

Weight, cost, and car design

SIR: While summarising a recent article of mine in The Autocar on the subject of car design you remarked (DESIGN No 23, p 29) that no reply had yet been given to the reader who suggested that more body space could be had by lengthening the wheelbase instead of by altering methods of construction, and criticised the desire of manufacturers to make their cars of thin sheet steel.

The Americans have adopted the long-wheelbase method, which has now produced cars over 18ft. long equipped with engines delivering about 150 b.h.p. A day in London should convince anyone that we have not the space, even if we could afford the petrol, to operate vehicles of this type.

Limited rear-seat leg-room is a weakness of many current British designs and contrasts unhappily with the greater seat width now available. A few more inches would be welcome, but weight is closely related to wheelbase and there is continued pressure to get weight down for engineering and economic reasons. Some Continental designers of mediumsized cars use a longer wheelbase for a given overall length; their wheels are nearer the corners but their bodies are no more roomy than ours because they keep the engine within the wheelbase to give good handling on corners.

Design and appearance are certainly influenced by the desire to press panels and structural members from steel sheet. The expense of buying and operating a car has already been raised beyond the reach of many by recent taxation and if we returned to more expensive methods of construction, then reader Parkhouse

might get his car—at a price—but a lot more of us would have to go without.

GORDON WILKINS
London Technical Editor
The Autocar
London SEI

Revolution - Evolution?

SIR: In general, I cannot help but agree with the viewpoint of your editorial, "The Value of Tradition" (DESIGN No 21). It seems to state a good part of the case for honest contemporary design very well indeed. I liked, too, the points you made about the purely functional approach. Over here, many of us have come to feel that the purely functional approach leaves a great deal to be desired and, moreover, does not really exist except in a purely theoretical sense. I do not believe however that one can calculate the proportions of functional elements and other less easily defined ones; at least, not in advance. Speaking as a designer, it seems to me that what one has to do is try to produce the object-of whatever description-that will do its job as well as possible. Always taking it for granted that one's emotional prejudices and one's feelings for form, texture, material and the rest of it will assert themselves whether or not one believes this is happening.

At one point you say: "Design without roots is like a ship without a rudder"; I imagine that this is perfectly true and also that it would be very difficult to find a design that did not have roots. I should think that any argument that might spring up at this point would



"The purely functional approach does not really exist," argues George Nelson, versatile US industrial designer and regular editorial contributor to Interiors magazine

have more to do with the definition of "roots" than with anything else. Frank Lloyd Wright found his "roots" in a kind of nondescript indigenous builderarchitecture that was springing up all over the US Middle West during the latter years of the nineteenth century. Men like Gropius and Le Corbusier looked for their roots in modern industrial technology, in the industrial scene itself and in modern painting and sculpture. Both kinds of thing (if they are really different) were revolutionary as well as evolutionary. Which brings me to the main point I should like to make about your editorial:

It has been my considered belief for a long time that there is no real difference between revolution and evolution but rather that both words describe the same process. A sport or mutation in nature might be described as revolutionary, but if it should prove successful it becomes part of a bigger evolutionary pattern. I think this is true in social experiment, in the arts, in attempts to find new ways in design and all the rest of it. Inevitably, as evolution proceeds, certain attempts are bound to fail. The attempts nevertheless must be made, and it is this necessity that gives them their validity. In our prevailing political atmosphere, the word "revolution" has become one to be avoided like the devil himself, and there has sprung up (among us at least) a kind of meaningless propaganda in favour of what is described as evolution. I would guess that this prevailing tendency is carried over into the fields of art criticism where, I should say, it has no more validity than it would appear to have on the political scene. It seems to me unthinkable that evolution could continue without revolution as an integral part of it. I do not believe, for example, that one could make the transition from the traditional types of wood furniture to the varied kinds of metal furniture that now exist without such revolutionary breaks as the Bauhaus experiments of the late 20's. For these reasons I am inclined to shy away from any attempt to make a distinction between these processes, although the distinction occasionally may have some educational or propaganda value.

Concerning a "design hallmark," there are attempts to establish such guides from time to time; most of them for advertising purposes. While it would be impossible not to recognise the value of these efforts in furthering contemporary design, I am a little inclined to deplore them because they indicate the existence of a very typical consumer who has no confidence in his

GEORGE NELSON

New York

or her own taste.

Educating the shopper

A book with a moral for manufacturers and retailers

Fabrics in the Home, by Roger Smithells (Herbert Jenkins Ltd; 25s) reviewed by Michael Sheridan

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NO ONE IN TOUCH with the public through such mediums as the popular magazines can doubt that there is rapidly being created a new post-war race of consumers-more critically aware of the objects around them in their homes, armed with considerable technical knowledge and, in many cases, an educated and certain taste. Equally, no one in touch with trade circles can doubt that, with notable exceptions, retailers and manufacturers dangerously under-estimate the extent of the revolution. Books like Fabrics in the Home-and there are increasing numbers of them-are the writing on the wa'l to the old school of salesmanship. If he is not very careful, the salesman may find himself in the untenable position of knowing just a little less about his stock than his customer.

Mr Smithells, after a historical survey

of textiles, describes many of the more useful fibres, listing their individual properties. He gives simple rules for identifying the fibre content of a fabric—a valuable service in these days of mixture cloths or even mixture yarns which may be so well disguised as to look like anything but what they are.

A chapter on shopping sense hints at what the trader must expect from his newly awakened public. If she takes Mr Smithells to heart, his customer will insist on seeing all fabrics in both daylight and artificial light "of the kind it will be in the room." If this helps to deal a blow at the essentially dishonest but growing tendency to have fluorescent lighting as different as possible from that in which the fabrics will be seen in the home, it will do a useful job.

Advice with perhaps a significance for the manufacturer is to use, with period furniture, contemporary fabrics with a flavour of the correct period rather than exact reproductions. The clever retailer will capitalise—as his American counterpart has already done—suggestions for unusual uses for fabrics. Wall panels, coverings for the Radio Times holder, decorative panels for plain built-in furniture, table place mats to match curtains, are but a few.

There is perhaps one unfortunate gap in the book, especially as the author sets out to cater "for students . . . requiring a specialised knowledge" as well as for the housewife: Mr Smithells excuses it by saying: "to attempt to give advice on the buying of rayon [and therefore, by corollary, on the selling of rayon] is almost impossible because of the great variety of types being produced." But one feels that some information should have been given about, say, the spun rayons. They form a large part of the soft furnishing department's post-war stock and have caused much heartburn because they are bought for purposes for which they are unsuitable-e.g., for upholstery coverings.

This could be avoided if manufacturers took Mr Smithells' advice to label their products with brief details of contents and properties, a course which has already been urged on them for years by rayon producers and retailers.

Fabrics in the Home is a book that the public will buy; the manufacturer and retailer would be unwise not to.

DESIGN's

plans

1951

With the season's greetings to all readers we couple the announcement of plans for a still better DESIGN magazine in the Mid-century Year

¶ FUTURE FEATURES

Maintaining DESIGN'S reputation for variety within its chosen sphere: JOHN GLOAG on English Hotels Today; B. W. GALVIN WRIGHT on Exhibition Design; DAVID MUNRO on Civilising the Motor-cycle. Reports on American machine-tool design, Danish furniture, Swiss telephones. Illustrations of new British products including marine radar equipment, arc-welding transformers, solid-fuel stove, electric fan, bathroom fittings, furnishing fabrics.

¶ ADVERTISING

Advertising space in the book Design in the Festival is fully booked; space in DESIGN magazine is still bookable, however. With our rising circulation, scheduled to rise still further

in Festival Year, rates remain unchanged (basically, £25 a page). A good buy. Details from DESIGN'S advertisement representative, Dennis W. Mayes, 69 Fleet Street, EC4: CENtral 4447.

¶ INDEX AND BINDING

This issue completes Volume 2 of DESIGN: regular postal subscribers will receive an index for the volume in next month's issue.

DESIGN's printers can supply binding cases in full cloth, for the year's issues. Subscribers can have their copies bound for 12s 6d; the case alone can be supplied for 4s 6d. Both prices include postage. Correspondence and remittances to Benham & Company Ltd, 24 High Street, Colchester, Essex.

continued

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Weight, cost, and car design

SIR: While summarising a recent article of mine in *The Autocar* on the subject of car design you remarked (DESIGN No 23, p 29) that no reply had yet been given to the reader who suggested that more body space could be had by lengthening the wheelbase instead of by altering methods of construction, and criticised the desire of manufacturers to make their cars of thin sheet steel.

The Americans have adopted the long-wheelbase method, which has now produced cars over 18ft. long equipped with engines delivering about 150 b.h.p. A day in London should convince anyone that we have not the space, even if we could afford the petrol, to operate vehicles of this type.

Limited rear-seat leg-room is a weakness of many current British designs and contrasts unhappily with the greater seat width now available. A few more inches would be welcome, but weight is closely related to wheelbase and there is continued pressure to get weight down for engineering and economic reasons. Some Continental designers of mediumsized cars use a longer wheelbase for a given overall length; their wheels are nearer the corners but their bodies are no more roomy than ours because they keep the engine within the wheelbase to give good handling on corners.

Design and appearance are certainly influenced by the desire to press panels and structural members from steel sheet. The expense of buying and operating a car has already been raised beyond the reach of many by recent taxation and if we returned to more expensive methods of construction, then reader Parkhouse

might get his car—at a price—but a lot more of us would have to go without.

GORDON WILKINS
London Technical Editor
The Autocar
London SEI

Revolution - Evolution?

SIR: In general, I cannot help but agree with the viewpoint of your editorial, "The Value of Tradition" (DESIGN No 21). It seems to state a good part of the case for honest contemporary design very well indeed. I liked, too, the points you made about the purely functional approach. Over here, many of us have come to feel that the purely functional approach leaves a great deal to be desired and, moreover, does not really exist except in a purely theoretical sense. I do not believe however that one can calculate the proportions of functional elements and other less easily defined ones; at least, not in advance. Speaking as a designer, it seems to me that what one has to do is try to produce the object-of whatever description-that will do its job as well as possible. Always taking it for granted that one's emotional prejudices and one's feelings for form, texture, material and the rest of it will assert themselves whether or not one believes this is happening.

At one point you say: "Design without roots is like a ship without a rudder"; I imagine that this is perfectly true and also that it would be very difficult to find a design that did not have roots. I should think that any argument that might spring up at this point would



"The purely functional approach does not really exist," argues George Nelson, versatile US industrial designer and regular editorial contributor to Interiors magazine

have more to do with the definition of "roots" than with anything else. Frank Lloyd Wright found his "roots" in a kind of nondescript indigenous builderarchitecture that was springing up all over the U S Middle West during the latter years of the nineteenth century. Men like Gropius and Le Corbusier looked for their roots in modern industrial technology, in the industrial scene itself and in modern painting and sculpture. Both kinds of thing (if they are really different) were revolutionary as well as evolutionary. Which brings me to the main point I should like to make about your editorial:

It has been my considered belief for a long time that there is no real difference between revolution and evolution but rather that both words describe the same process. A sport or mutation in nature might be described as revolutionary, but if it should prove successful it becomes part of a bigger evolutionary pattern. I think this is true in social experiment, in the arts, in attempts to find new ways in design and all the rest of it. Inevitably, as evolution proceeds, certain attempts are bound to fail. The attempts nevertheless must be made, and it is this necessity that gives them their validity. In our prevailing political atmosphere, the word "revolution" has become one to be avoided like the devil himself, and there has sprung up (among us at least) a kind of meaningless propaganda in favour of what is described as evolution. I would guess that this prevailing tendency is carried over into the fields of art criticism where, I should say, it has no more validity than it would appear to have on the political scene. It seems to me unthinkable that evolution could continue without revolution as an integral part of it. I do not believe, for example, that one could make the transition from the traditional types of wood furniture to the varied kinds of metal furniture that now exist without such revolutionary breaks as the Bauhaus experiments of the late 20's. For these reasons I am inclined to shy away from any attempt to make a distinction between these processes, although the distinction occasionally may have some educational or propaganda value.

Concerning a "design hallmark," there are attempts to establish such guides from time to time; most of them for advertising purposes. While it would be impossible not to recognise the value of these efforts in furthering contemporary design, I am a little inclined to deplore them because they indicate the existence of a very typical consumer who has no confidence in his or her own taste.

GEORGE NELSON New York

Educating the shopper

A book with a moral for manufacturers and retailers

Fabrics in the Home, by Roger Smithells (Herbert Jenkins Ltd; 25s) reviewed by Michael Sheridan

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NO ONE IN TOUCH with the public through such mediums as the popular magazines can doubt that there is rapidly being created a new post-war race of consumers-more critically aware of the objects around them in their homes, armed with considerable technical knowledge and, in many cases, an educated and certain taste. Equally, no one in touch with trade circles can doubt that, with notable exceptions, retailers and manufacturers dangerously under-estimate the extent of the revolution. Books like Fabrics in the Home-and there are increasing numbers of them-are the writing on the wa'l to the old school of salesmanship. If he is not very careful, the salesman may find himself in the untenable position of knowing just a little less about his stock than his customer.

Mr Smithells, after a historical survey

of textiles, describes many of the more useful fibres, listing their individual properties. He gives simple rules for identifying the fibre content of a fabric—a valuable service in these days of mixture cloths or even mixture yarns which may be so well disguised as to look like anything but what they are.

A chapter on shopping sense hints at what the trader must expect from his newly awakened public. If she takes Mr Smithells to heart, his customer will insist on seeing all fabrics in both daylight and artificial light "of the kind it will be in the room." If this helps to deal a blow at the essentially dishonest but growing tendency to have fluorescent lighting as different as possible from that in which the fabrics will be seen in the home, it will do a useful job.

Advice with perhaps a significance for the manufacturer is to use, with period furniture, contemporary fabrics with a flavour of the correct period rather than exact reproductions. The clever retailer will capitalise—as his American counterpart has already done—suggestions for unusual uses for fabrics. Wall panels, coverings for the Radio Times holder, decorative panels for plain built-in furniture, table place mats to match curtains, are but a few.

There is perhaps one unfortunate gap in the book, especially as the author sets out to cater "for students . . . requiring a specialised knowledge" as well as for the housewife: Mr Smithells excuses it by saving: "to attempt to give advice on the buying of rayon [and therefore, by corollary, on the selling of rayonl is almost impossible because of the great variety of types being produced." But one feels that some information should have been given about, say, the spun They form a large part of the soft furnishing department's post-war stock and have caused much heartburn because they are bought for purposes for which they are unsuitable-e.g., for upholstery coverings.

This could be avoided if manufacturers took Mr Smithells' advice to label their products with brief details of contents and properties, a course which has already been urged on them for years by rayon producers and retailers.

Fabrics in the Home is a book that the public will buy; the manufacturer and retailer would be unwise not to.

DESIGN's

plans

1951

With the season's greetings to all readers we couple the announcement of plans for a still better DESIGN magazine in the Mid-century Year

¶ FUTURE FEATURES

Maintaining DESIGN'S reputation for variety within its chosen sphere: JOHN GLOAG on English Hotels Today; B. W. GALVIN WRIGHT on Exhibition Design; DAVID MUNRO on Civilising the Motor-cycle. Reports on American machine-tool design, Danish furniture, Swiss telephones. Illustrations of new British products including marine radar equipment, arc-welding transformers, solid-fuel stove, electric fan, bathroom fittings, furnishing fabrics.

¶ ADVERTISING

Advertising space in the book *Design* in the Festival is fully booked; space in DESIGN magazine is still bookable, however. With our rising circulation, scheduled to rise still further

in Festival Year, rates remain unchanged (basically, £25 a page). A good buy. Details from DESIGN's advertisement representative, Dennis W. Mayes, 69 Fleet Street, EC4: CENTral 4447.

¶ INDEX AND BINDING

This issue completes Volume 2 of DESIGN: regular postal subscribers will receive an index for the volume in next month's issue.

DESIGN's printers can supply binding cases in full cloth, for the year's issues. Subscribers can have their copies bound for 12s 6d; the case alone can be supplied for 4s 6d. Both prices include postage. Correspondence and remittances to Benham & Company Ltd, 24 High Street, Colchester, Essex.

Notebook

Design in advertising

Anyone who has wrestled with the production of a journal containing advertisements knows that, while some advertisers are fully as enlightened as publishers, there are others whose advertisements fail to harmonise with wellplanned editorial pages. It is significant that, after Management Publications Ltd changed the editorial layout of The Manager, their Chairman, Lord Verulam, gave a half-hour talk to a group of advertisers and business men to explain the changes which had been made and the reasons for them; and appealed for advertisers' co-operation in maintaining the standard set by the magazine

Lord Verulam, who is chairman and managing director of Enfield Cables Ltd, Sternol Ltd, and a number of other companies, was recently widely reported for his plain speaking on the subject of junk displayed at the BIF; his address at the British Institute of Management again emphasised his interest in good design.

Dollars for textiles

The gayest cover-design we have seen for some time appears on a new publication of the Dollar Exports Board, Dollar Sales: How cotton, rayon, silk and furnishing fabrics are sold in the USA. It is an adaptation by Stuart Rose, MSIA, of an American textile design.

It contains a lot of information on the American market for British textiles. There is more emphasis on fashionand, consequently, on the various forms of dress textiles-than on furnishing fabrics, but many of the comments are widely applicable. For example: "It is not advisable to copy American fabric styles and designs. English traditional designs with their distinctive handwriting . . . sell because they are different from the American product; but unless they are coloured to suit American tastes not many British products are saleable. . . . Wherever we went most British colours were criticised as being too drab-whether buyers were talking about women's dresses, sportswear, men's ties, or window curtains. There is an overriding demand in all parts of America for colours to be brighter and more intense than they are in England." Dollar Sales: 4 does not fall into the common error of overlooking unpleasant facts. It gives a clear warning that there is no registration of textile designs in the States as there is in Britain, and adds that British dyed or printed fabrics which sell well in America are likely to be quickly copied by the home producer. The exporter is advised to concentrate, instead, on woven fabrics which cannot be copied so quickly, and because tastes change rapidly, stand a fair chance of not being copied at all.

Dollar Sales: 4 is a book which all textile producers and designers ought to see. Price 2s 6d, from the Board (Thames House North, Millbank, SW1).

Compulsory art

Street furniture is everybody's business; and, like other things of this kind, it tends to become nobody's business. In recent months, however, the Press has had a good deal to say about it. The Observer, in July, referred to it as "art made compulsory: anybody can dodge a book or a piece of music, but buildings and lamp posts he must see." In August, a letter to The Times from John Betjeman started a flow of correspondence on the subject, with a leading article to round things off. DESIGN'S own contributions have included photographs of bus stop signs, street nameplates, and public lettering; a whole booklet on the subject is promised, under Council of Industrial Design auspices; and the latest number of the



Dutch tubular steel lamp standard, 1945: from the Design Folio referred to below

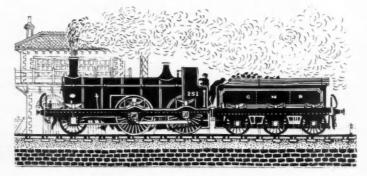
Council's Design Folios for schools is also devoted to street furniture. A few cautionary examples are illustrated in line drawings, while the finely reproduced photographic plates show examples from Holland and Scandinavia, and from Britain's past, which put to shame much of Britain's present-day production in this field.

The ARK sails

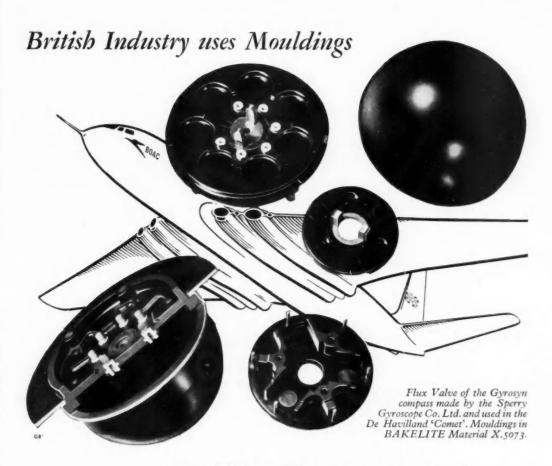
ARK, the journal of the Royal College of Art, has been launched with a lively first number. Jack Stafford and S. F. V. Noble are editor and art editor respectively; contributors include outside writers as well as RCA students. As this first issue is devoted entirely to book illustration, the College's graphic-design students are, naturally, well represented. Their work shows a reassuring variety of styles.

ARK's second issue (February) is due to have 56 pages, including several

continued on p 36



Students of the Graphic Design School at the Royal College of Art illustrated, as an exercise, a book on British railways, pre-1900. This drawing by E. W. Fenton was reproduced in the College journal, ARK, noted above



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Design: Number 24

plates in colour lithography. Its theme will be "Domestic Art," ranging over the whole field of fine and applied art.

The magazine's "landscape" shape and a distinctive cover design make it easy to recognise on the bookstalls; the pages in which the type area is divided into two columns are easier on the eyes than those set to the full seven-inch width.

ARK is due to appear three times a year, at half-a-crown a time. (RCA, Exhibition Road, London SW7.)

Tailpieces

From a Press hand-out describing a newly redecorated West End restaurant:

The motif of the Restaurant is Venetian... The décor was designed by the famous French artist M. Gaston. From another hand-out, listing some of the things to be seen at next year's British Industries Fair:

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The sorcerer was reputed to have the power of converting human beings into strange animals. He turned princesses into frogs - men into swine. As the change was almost always for the worst, his magic powers were greatly feared - and with good reason! The sorcerer of the present day is the organic chemist, but his work is everywhere welcomed, because the changes he makes possible are always for the better. Have you ever seen a piece of cotton cloth coming straight from the loom? A drab and shabby-looking article indeed. But see it later, after it has been cleaned, softened, filled, made creaseless and given a lustre. What a transformation is there . . . sow's ear into silk purse, toad into princess . . . a transformation directly due to the wide range of textile chemicals known as auxiliary products, made by the British dyestuffs industry. There is little that the British organic chemists cannot do with textiles. They have auxiliary products which make cotton as transparent as glass, others which soften it to resemble swansdown or make it so stiff that a pleated collar sticks out like an old-time ruff. They can make cotton look like silk or dull the lustre of rayon. They have chemicals known as stripping agents, which take the dye out of a fabric, and wetting agents, which make materials more absorbent. They have even evolved a product which enables the softest fabric to repel water without loss of texture. It is no exaggeration to say that the chemist through these organic auxiliary products makes the modern

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